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Centers OF RELIEF AND RECONCILIATION

The Quaker Program in Germany

The American Friends Service Committee commenced its present program in Germany in the spring of 1946. It had been a grim and tragic winter for millions; and broken and hungry families huddled together in unheated and unlighted hovels beneath the ruins of once beautiful cities. Homes, hospitals, schools, factories, churches had been destroyed. Modern warfare is no respecter of persons or places.

During the years 1946, 1947 and 1948 the Committee helped to supply a daily supplementary meal to upwards of three million people, mostly children, in Germany. For these were the starvation years and it was necessary for the Committee to administer relief upon the broadest possible scale. Everyone was hungry and the supplies were pitifully inadequate. Only the most needy could be helped and they were carefully selected by German doctors for feeding.

Certainly within modern times no equivalent destruction had ever been visited upon a nation. It was evident that the task of reconstruction and reconciliation would be long and arduous.

Early in 1946, Dr. Hertha Kraus, Professor of Sociology at Bryn Mawr College, visited Germany for the A.F.S.C. to seek ways by which we could best help the people in their desperate struggle against hunger, disease and despair. Upon her advice a number of Neighborhood and Student Centers, patterned somewhat along the lines of the Settlement Houses in America, were started in some of the most severely bombed and damaged cities.

Set down in communities of want, where the simplest facilities for orderly and decent living were not available, the logic of these Centers is at once apparent. They provide space and equipment: meeting rooms, play rooms, sewing rooms, work shops, and warming rooms; and offer technical services such as laundry, shoe repairing and child care. Together with the necessary relief supplies of sewing materials, leather, tools, laundry soaps, and special foods, these services are an important stimulus to self-help and mutual aid. They facilitate many rehabilitative projects which would otherwise be impossible.

Centers have been established in Berlin, Goettingen, Brunswick, Cologne, Wuppertal-Barmen, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Munich, Freiburg, and Ludwigshafen. The Centers are each managed by a Board of Directors recruited from the neighborhood in which they are situated. Individual leaders in the community, such as social workers, school teachers, doctors and ministers, together with the A.F.S.C. staff, serve on this board of management.

We look forward to the day when the German people will be able to carry on these centers without the aid of American personnel and supplies. That day has not yet come, and we feel keenly our responsibility for continuing our support.

They are truly centers of hope; for along with relief and self-help they serve as avenues of friendship and goodwill. Through them we are able to demonstrate all that is best in the American way of life.

These Centers were established with your help. Through your generosity they have brought relief and encouragement to thousands. They now represent our ongoing responsibility to the German people. We are committed to their support for as long as the need shall last.

Only with your continued financial help can we keep these ten Centers in operation. They still meet a vital need in the communities they serve. We ask you to make them your responsibility also.

Dena

FRANKFURT BARRACK CENTER Young Germans of the community helped build this Center.

Dickey and Tony Chapelle

STUDENT CENTER This study and recreation room is a haven for college students amid the ruins of the University of Freiburg.

Neighborhood Centers:

ISLANDS OF FRIENDSHIP AND GOOD WILL

Campbell Hays

NEW SHOES FOR OLD Shoe repairs at nominal cost are among self-help facilities available at AFSC Centers.

Dickey and Tony Chapelle

PUPPET SHOW Such events attract many young visitors in need of recreation in a German world of ruins and crowded schools.

Campbell Hays

SEWING ROOM AFSC sewing machines are available to wives and mothers who come to repair and remodel family wardrobes.

Campbell Hays

CHILDREN'S REST HOME At Mittelhof Center, Berlin, supplemental food and quiet play help restore the health of needy children.

Dickey and Tony Chapelle

KNITTING GROUP Wool and needles provided by the AFSC mean warm garments and an occasion for much needed sociability.

DISCUSSION GROUP Friendly discussion answers a deep postwar need of bewildered youth. Every AFSC center provides this expression for young Germans.

Dickey and Tony Chapelle

CENTER BOARD MEETING Members of each German community where there are AFSC centers serve on the board and help plan events.

Dickey and Tony Chapelle

What Your Dollars Will Accomplish

$1.00 will cover all daily expenses for two children attending a Neighborhood Center Kinderhort. This sum includes recreation and care under the supervision of a trained Kindergarten teacher, with one nourishing meal each day.

$2.50 will give the same care to one needy child for a week.

$5.00 will defray the Kinderhort costs of 2 children for a week, or provide a light evening meal for 150 students attending a discussion group.

$10.00 will feed a child at the Mittelhof Kinderhort in Berlin for one month; or provide 75 hot evening dinners for the poorest of the students at a Quaker Student Center. This sum will heat the study and reading room at the Goettingen Student Center for one month; or keep the knitting class of 15 girls at the Darmstadt Center supplied with wool for one month.

$20.00 will give a completely tired-out social worker, nurse, doctor, or teacher, perhaps from the Russian Zone, 18 days of rest and recuperation in the Berlin Neighborhood Center Rest Home.

$25.00 will provide enough electric light at a student Center for 50 students to study in the evening for an entire school year.

$100.00 will keep the child day care program of the Darmstadt Center in operation for 3 months.

The above is far from comprehensive. A few examples have been selected at random to give you some idea of how far your dollars will go in providing these essential, life-giving services in Germany.

For further information consult The American Friends Service Committee
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